Algiers United Methodist Church

617 Opelousas Street

By the early 1840s, the thriving West Bank community of Algiers Point was ready and eager for a Methodist church. Accordingly, in 1843 a Sunday school opened at the Duverje plantation house, and one year later the simple frame structure known as Good Hope Chapel was completed, using lumber salvaged from a flat-bottomed boat.

Renamed Algiers Methodist Episcopal Church, South (a name that reflected preCivil War dissensions within Methodism) in 1847, the building was abandoned in 1857 because of severe river erosion. Today that site is underwater, some 300 feet from the levee.

A second building was erected at Delaronde and Lavergne streets, at a cost of $4,000. Its distinctive steeple was surmounted by a gilded hand, the index finger pointing upwards as if to affirm the congregations faith in God above; this gave the church its nickname: The Finger-Up Church

The severe hurricane of 1915 completely destroyed that structure. Temporary quarters sufficed until this building, at yet another location, was dedicated in December 1921. A Möller organ was installed, as well as a splendid church bell, which was donated by the Ship Carpenters and Caulkers Union. The windows were simple panes of lavender glass. Two of these are now in storerooms behind the organ and choir area. (Total cost: $33,987.40)

The church and its congregation flourished. Time and a changing population base, however, took their toll, and by the middle 1970s the members determined to reassert the significance of the Algiers Methodist Church.

To attain that goal, the church underwent extensive redecorating, and the marvelous windows seen today were installed. The cost in 1979 was $33,000 (about the same as the building itself in 1921), and the Milton Pounds Studio in Covington was responsible for their design and execution.

These windows depict scenes from the New Testament and derive strength from the use of brilliant color, heavy outlining, and *dalle de verre,* or slab glass. Often measuring as much as an inch thick, it was hammered and chipped to obtain faceted surfaces. Because they were executed at the same time, they show a uniformity often missing in church windows. The bright colors of these windows add a sunny, cheering aura to the church.

**Windows**

Pentecost Birth of Jesus

Ascension Jesus and the Children

Resurrection Loaves and Fishes

Crucifixion Matthew

John Mark

Luke Good Shepherd

Garden of Gethsemane

Holy Spirit

*Visited*

*April 14, 1991*

*May 21, 2006*

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